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S E C R E T PRAGUE 001505

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/19/2015

TAGS: PHUM PREL MOPS EZ

SUBJECT: CZECHS SAY &NO8 TO THE UIGHURS, BUT AGREE TO RECONSIDER

REF: A. STATE 183800

1B. PRAGUE 01446

Classified By: Poloff Sarah C. Peck for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

1. (U) Action request at paragraph 5.

2. (S) Summary. Frantisek Bublan, the Czech Minister of the Interior, informed the DCM that the GOCHR has denied our request to resettle 15 Uighur men in the Czech Republic, citing foreign policy and security concerns. Post believes the Czech decision was reached after careful consideration at the highest levels, and is therefore likely to be final. However, at the urging of the DCM, Minister Bublan agreed to reconsider. Therefore, Post asks the Department to provide immediate guidance on ways we can negotiate a resettlement package for at least some of the Uighurs that would effectively address the concerns raised by the Czechs. End summary.

3. (S) On October 20, DCM met with Minister Bublan (in the absence of Ambassador, who was traveling in country) to discuss the question of the Uighur detainees (reftels). Minister Bublan said that he understood the strong humanitarian need to resettle these men and therefore had carefully considered the request for assistance. He noted that he had discussed the request with the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, and Czech intelligence services. However, the Czechs have turned down the request to resettle the 15 Uighurs in the Czech Republic for the following reasons:

a. Foreign policy: taking the Uighurs would have a negative impact on already strained relations with China;

b. Internal security: the Uighurs are Wahab Muslims and have been trained by an extremist organization, and therefore could pose a threat to the internal security of the Czech Republic; and

c. Relations with EU neighbors: The Czech Republic's neighbors would not want the Czechs to take the men, and indeed have already refused to accept them. Moreover, the Czechs are trying to comply with Schengen. They are concerned that accepting the detainees would undermine that effort.

4. (S) DCM asked Minister Bublan to consider taking only a few of the detainees, noting that at least some of the men may not pose an internal security threat. He also said the resettlement could be kept confidential, and that further discussion might result in a resettlement package that could alleviate all three of the Czech concerns. Minister Bublan agreed to reconsider his decision.

5. (S) Action request. Post asks Department to provide guidance as soon as possible (preferably by OOB Friday, November 21) on ways Post can negotiate a resettlement package for at least some of the Uighurs that would effectively address the concerns raised by Minister Bublan. Specifically: (1) more information on the five Uighurs singled out in the talking points (see reftel A), in order to assuage Czech concerns that these men constitute a security threat domestically; (2) guidance on how the resettlement can remain confidential; and (3) guidance on incentives that can be offered to the Czechs.

6. (S) Comment. The Czechs have carefully considered the USG's request, and their decision is likely to be final. However, the door is still open a crack. Post believes the Czechs may reconsider their decision if offered: (1) a resettlement package that effectively addresses their concerns; and (2) a political incentive that the Prime Minister would find impossible to pass up, and that is commensurate with the costs and risks the Czech will necessarily assume if they agree to resettle any of these men. CABANISS